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SUBJECT: HIGH REP LAJCAK BRIEFS UNSC ON BOSNIA

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On May 19, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Miroslav Lajcak told the Security Council that the situation in BiH had improved significantly since his November 2007 briefing, pointing to BiH's imminent signing of a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU and recent progress toward NATO membership. Lajcak warned that some officials in BiH's Republika Srpska have recently resurrected claims that Kosovo's independence should be a precedent for the entity's status. He said leadership is needed in BiH's political class to overcome the perception that "nationalism equals votes." BiH Prime Minister Nikola Spiric expressed satisfaction that BiH's authorities had resolved last fall's political crisis through compromise and dialogue and achieved some success in progress toward the EU and NATO. Spiric said that BiH's Council of Ministers had passed many important laws and decisions recently and expects BiH's Parliamentary Assembly to adopt the approved legislation. Russian Permrep Churkin declared that the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) Steering Board should show "political wisdom" and not delay the transition from the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to an EU Special Representative based on "an expanded interpretation of a positive assessment of the region." Ambassador Khalilzad reaffirmed U.S. support for continuation of the High Representative's mandate until BiH meets the conditions and objectives outlined in February by the PIC Steering Board. Serbian Permrep Jevremovic objected to portions of Lajcak's report that he suggested singled out Serbia unfairly. End summary.

Lajcak: Praises Progress In Bosnia, Warns Of Linkages To Kosovo

¶2. (SBU) On May 19, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Lajcak delivered his semi-annual briefing to the Security Council on the situation in BiH. He said the political climate had improved significantly since his November 2007 briefing when the country faced a crisis. The High Representative noted with approval that BiH is scheduled to sign a SAA with the EU on June 16 and praised BiH's recent progress toward NATO membership. He underscored the importance of the PIC Steering Board's establishment in February of clear conditions and objectives for closing OHR and replacing it with an EU Special Representative in BiH. Lajcak recounted developments over the reporting period including his convening of the six political parties in November to reach the Mostar Agreement related to police reform and the initialing of an SAA by BiH on December 4.

¶3. (SBU) Lajcak stated that public reaction to Kosovo's declaration of independence has been muted and there have been no official support for the more extreme manifestations of Serb anger. However, he noted that officials in Republika Srpska's leadership have linked the entity's status to that of Kosovo and have asked for an asymmetric confederation, alleging that the UN Charter gives them the right to self-determination. Lajcak said that Republika Srpska's

parliament had passed a resolution in February claiming it has the right to a referendum on independence if a majority of EU countries recognize Kosovo. Lajcak explained that he had responded to these moves strongly, defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of BiH. Lajcak underscored that leadership is needed in BiH's political class to overcome the perception that nationalism equals votes. Lajcak said a strategic agreement is needed on the distribution of competencies between the state and entities so that attention can be turned to EU integration. Lajcak stressed that the prospect of EU integration provides the only hope for Bosnia and it must have confidence that the international community is there to help.

Statement By Bosnian Prime Minister Spiric

14. (SBU) BiH Prime Minister Spiric expressed satisfaction with BiH's authorities' resolution of last fall's political crisis through compromise and dialogue and with BiH's success in initializing an SAA and achieving Intensified Dialogue at the NATO Summit in Bucharest. Spiric said that BiH's Council of Ministers had passed many important laws and decisions recently and expects BiH's Parliamentary Assembly to adopt the approved legislation. Spiric promised to continue working hard on police reform. He said BiH's economy is on the right track even though it has further progress to make. Spiric called constitutional reform "an important challenge" that he said must be dealt with based on internal dialogue, not pressure from abroad. He said rule of law must be the foundation for BiH becoming a reliable partner for the international community and "even Bosnia's ministers cannot

USUN NEW Y 00000453 002 OF 002

be above the law."

Statements By UNSC Members

15. (SBU) Chinese Deputy Permrep Liu averred that because BiH and Kosovo are related geographically, historically, and ethnically, Kosovo's February 17 declaration of independence had a negative impact on BiH. He stressed that China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of BiH.

16. (SBU) Russian Permrep Churkin stated that Russia strongly supports Lajcak. He said that the PIC Steering Board should show "political wisdom" and not delay the transition to an EU Special Representative based on "an expanded interpretation of a positive assessment of the region" that would set too high of a bar for proceeding with the transition. He asserted that BiH is no worse off than other states in the region that have no high representative. Churkin rejected the notion of a third entity in BiH as not consistent with the Dayton Agreement. He assessed that overall the situation in BiH has improved since last fall.

17. (SBU) Croatian Permrep Jurica stated that Croats represent the smallest constituency in BiH and their interests must be kept in mind and protected, adding that there cannot be a whole and united BiH without Croats. Jurica also echoed the PIC Steering Board's call for Serbia to meet its legal obligations and arrest Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, which he said would help remove the stigma from the Republika Srpska and improve inter-ethnic relations in Bosnia.

18. (SBU) Ambassador Khalilzad reaffirmed U.S. support for continuation of the High Representative's mandate until BiH meets the conditions and objectives outlined in February by the PIC Steering Board. He also called for BiH to cooperate with NATO to further its candidacy, encouraged BiH's leaders to avoid divisive political rhetoric, and stressed the need for improvements to BiH's Dayton constitution.

19. (SBU) France Deputy Permrep Lacroix stressed support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of BiH and

criticized as counter to Dayton any calls for the advancement of individual entities over the interests of the whole country. UK Deputy Permrep Karen Pierce rejected any linkages between Kosovo and Bosnia.

Statement By Serbia

¶10. (SBU) Speaking under rule 37 that allows UN member states not on the Security Council to participate in its meetings upon request, Serbian Permrep Jevremovic expressed support for BiH's sovereignty and territorial integrity and appealed for full compliance with all of Dayton's provisions. Jevremovic objected to what he said were calls in Lajcak's report that unfairly singled out Serbia regarding ICTY cooperation obligations and the February 2007 ICJ verdict on war criminals.

Khalilzad